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SECOND PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in response to Security Council resolution 866 (1993) of 22 September 1993, by which the Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). In paragraph 13 thereof, the Council requested me to report by 16 December 1993 and 16 February 1994 on the progress achieved in the implementation of UNOMIL's mandate.

2. In response to my report of 13 December 1993 (S/26868), the President of the Security Council informed me, in a letter dated 17 December 1993 (S/26886), that the Council shared my expectation that, despite the unavoidable delays in the implementation of resolution 866 (1993), the disarmament of combatants would begin presently, the transitional Government would soon be installed and the elections in Liberia would be held in the first half of 1994. He also stated that the Council looked forward to my next report on or before 16 February 1994 on the further progress achieved in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

I. POLITICAL ASPECTS

3. It is recalled that, in the Cotonou Agreement of 25 July 1993 (S/26272, annex), the parties agreed that encampment would commence immediately upon the deployment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) and the United Nations Observer Mission (UNOMIL), ECOMOG being understood as an expanded ECOMOG with African troops from outside the West African region. Furthermore the transitional Government would be installed in approximately 30 days of the date of the signature of the Agreement, concomitant with the commencement of the disarmament process.

4. As I noted in my last report (S/26868), President Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo of Benin, Chairman of ECOWAS, arranged for a meeting of the three Liberian parties, from 3 to 5 November 1993, on matters relating to the installation of the Liberian National Transitional Government. As a result of this meeting, the parties reached agreement on the distribution of 13 of the total 17 cabinet posts of the transitional Government. In December 1993, the parties resumed

their talks in Monrovia. After two weeks of intense negotiations and consultations with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UNOMIL, the parties failed to reach agreement on the disposition of the four remaining ministerial portfolios, i.e. Defence, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Finance. They were also unable to agree on the date for the seating of the transitional Government and for the beginning of encampment, disarmament and demobilization of combatants. The parties have since engaged in a public debate to explain their respective positions.

5. From November of 1993 until very recently, the parties were in disagreement over issues related to the installation of the transitional Government and the commencement of disarmament. The position of National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL/NPRAG) and of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) has been that the installation of the transitional Government should coincide with the arrival of additional ECOMOG troops as, in their view, the arrival of the first contingent of these troops (see para. 24 below for details) constitutes a substantial step towards the initiation of the disarmament process. The Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), on the other hand, has maintained the view that the installation of the transitional Government should take place only after the conclusive or actual commencement of disarmament.

6. Very recently, there have been indications that IGNU has changed its position and now takes the view that the installation of the transitional Government and the commencement of disarmament can take place at the same time, but only after all critical logistical requirements of ECOMOG for disarmament are in place.

7. Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, visited Liberia from 13 to 15 December 1993. During his visit, Mr. Jonah held consultations with the leaders of the Liberian parties, as well as with the Field Commander of ECOMOG and the members of the Council of State. His visit, during this critical phase of the peace process, served to reaffirm to the Liberian parties the United Nations full support of ECOMOG and ECOWAS in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

8. On 16 January 1994, NPFL/NPRAG opened the roads leading to Gbarnga. In a press statement released at the time, NPFL/NPRAG called for the immediate removal of all obstacles to national reconciliation. This event was welcomed by IGNU. However IGNU noted that the opening of roads by NPFL should be seen within the broader context of the commitments each party had made under the Cotonou Agreement.

9. In a letter dated 18 January 1994 (S/1994/51), the President of the Security Council expressed the concern of the Council that the transitional Government had not yet been installed, disarmament had not yet commenced, the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement was thus being delayed and efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to all parts of the country had met with difficulties. He furthermore noted in his letter that the continued support of the international community for the efforts of UNOMIL would depend on the full and prompt implementation by the parties of the Cotonou Agreement.

10. My Special Representative, Mr. Gordon-Somers, and the Reverend Canaan Banana, Eminent Person of OAU for Liberia, visited Cotonou on 18 and 19 January 1994 and held consultations with President Soglo on the situation in Liberia. My Special Representative briefed President Soglo on the Security Council communication of 18 January as well as on the views of the parties regarding the commencement of disarmament and the installation of the transitional Government. President Soglo expressed his support for the Security Council's position and indicated that he would encourage the parties to overcome the political impasse that had delayed the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

11. Upon his return to Liberia, my Special Representative held bilateral consultations with each of the three parties and relayed to them the message of the Security Council, namely that the Council expected to see tangible progress in the peace process. He stressed in this regard that the installation of the transitional Government and disarmament should take place concomitantly. My Special Representative has reported that the parties reiterated their willingness to cooperate in the effective implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. It is hoped that the parties will soon meet to reach agreement on this issue.

II. ELECTIONS

12. The Cotonou Agreement called for the transitional Government, through the current Elections Commission, to organize and carry out the elections. Despite the current political deadlock, the Elections Commission has been established, including a total of seven members representing the three parties. The Commission is expected to select its Executive Director shortly. The Commission meets regularly to plan and organize its work and is currently involved in a review of the legal instruments pertaining to elections, as well as the reactivation of a technical committee to conduct a new population survey and to assess the needs for the electoral process.

13. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the Carter Center and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), are providing technical assistance to the Elections Commission. The transitional Government is, however, responsible for financing the elections. My Special Representative has advised me that, without external financial contributions, the transitional Government will not be able to meet the resource requirements for holding the elections.

14. In my 9 September 1993 report (S/26422) on the establishment of UNOMIL, it was envisaged that, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement, elections would take place in February/March 1994. This time-frame was based on the assumption that disarmament and the installation of the transitional Government would be carried out without delay. In his letter of 18 January 1994 (S/1994/51), the President of the Security Council expressed the Council's hope that, by the time I submitted the present report, the progress achieved by the Liberian parties in the implementation of the peace process would have enabled me to recommend a precise timetable for the holding of the elections. Unfortunately, I am unable

to do so since the transitional Government has not yet been installed. According to the joint United Nations/IFES electoral assessment mission that visited Liberia in October 1993, elections could take place approximately six months after the installation of the transitional Government.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

A. Deployment of UNOMIL

15. UNOMIL attained its total authorized strength of 368 military observers, including 20 medical and 45 engineering personnel, in early January 1994. The preliminary deployment of these military observers throughout Liberia has commenced, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement and the UNOMIL concept of operations presented in my report of 9 September 1993 (see attached map).

16. At the time of my last report in December 1993, UNOMIL was facing difficulties in gaining free access throughout Liberia. I am pleased to report that, as a result of consultations which my Special Representative and Chief Military Observer have held with NPFL/NPRAG and ULIMO, UNOMIL is progressively gaining access to the various regions of the country. NPFL/NPRAG has agreed to the timetable for UNOMIL's deployment in the northern and eastern regions. As a result of discussions with ULIMO, UNOMIL has undertaken reconnaissance missions to the western region in order to draw up a timetable for further deployment in the area.

17. To date, three of UNOMIL's four regional headquarters have been established in Monrovia (central region), Tubmanburg (western region) and Gbarnga (northern region). It is expected that the eastern regional headquarters will be established before the end of February. Deployment of military observers at border crossings, seaports and airports has also begun in accordance with UNOMIL's concept of operations.

B. Monitoring of the cease-fire

18. In accordance with the Cotonou Agreement, ECOMOG is to establish buffer zones along Liberia's borders. To date, border checkpoints have been established in the northern region. In the western region, along the border with Sierra Leone, UNOMIL is consulting with ULIMO on the establishment of three checkpoints at the border towns of Bo, Kongo and Vahun. Consultations are also continuing with NPFL/NPRAG on the establishment of border checkpoints in the eastern region.

19. In my previous report to the Security Council, I informed the Council that two new armed groups had emerged in Liberia, the Lofa Defence Force (LDF) and the Liberian Peace Council (LPC). I also reported at that time that the security situation in the north-west and south-east was unstable. Since then the situation in the north-west has stabilized. However, it is reported that the fighting in the south-east between NPFL and LPC has intensified, especially in Grand Bassa and Rivercess counties. As a result, over the past month nearly 10,000 people have been displaced from this area and have moved towards the

coastal town of Buchanan. There have also been reports indicating that a third armed group, the "Bong Resistance Movement", has emerged in Bong County, but the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee (JCMC) has so far been unable to confirm these reports.

20. The subgroups of JCMC have continued to conduct routine patrolling and investigations in their areas of responsibility. To date, JCMC has received a total of 101 reports of cease-fire violations. The Committee has investigated 79 of these reports and has settled them amicably. Twenty-two cease-fire violations are still under investigation.

21. As foreseen in the Cotonou Agreement, JCMC will be replaced by a violations committee once the expanded ECOMOG and UNOMIL are deployed throughout the country. The violations committee will be composed of UNOMIL, ECOMOG and one representative from each of the parties.

22. There have been a number of incidents during the reporting period involving the obstruction of United Nations and NGO personnel in the discharge of their official duties by combatants apparently acting on their own initiative. These low-level incidents are considered to reflect fragmentation within the various parties, especially as the period between the signing of the Cotonou Agreement and the start of disarmament has been prolonged.

23. In late December 1993, some ULIMO elements looted the base camp of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at Vahun at the Sierra Leone border in Lofa County and took nine United Nations and NGO vehicles from the camp. Given the resulting insecurity, all United Nations and NGO personnel, as well as 84 orphans from the UNHCR refugee camp, were evacuated to Monrovia. The JCMC team in Vahun was also obliged to close down its base and return to Monrovia. As a result of consultations held by the Chief Military Observer of UNOMIL with the ULIMO leader, Alhaji Kromah, five of the nine vehicles were returned to the United Nations and the concerned NGOs in the first part of January. Since then, UNOMIL and UNHCR have undertaken reconnaissance missions to Vahun, with a view to re-establishing their presence in the area.

C. Expansion of ECOMOG force

24. It will be recalled that, throughout the peace negotiations in Geneva and in Cotonou, the expansion of ECOMOG was viewed as a crucial prerequisite for the implementation of the peace agreement. As indicated in my report of 13 December 1993 (S/26828), the Governments of the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe have agreed to contribute a battalion each to the ECOMOG force. The battalions from the United Republic of Tanzania (consisting of 773 personnel) and Uganda (consisting of 796 personnel), arrived in Monrovia on 8 January and 28 January 1994 respectively. The Tanzanian battalion, located at Kakata, and the Ugandan battalion, located at Buchanan, are preparing for deployment to the northern and eastern regions of the country. Consultations with the Government of Zimbabwe are continuing on the deployment of the third battalion of additional ECOMOG troops.

25. On 26 December 1993, the ECOMOG Field Commander and the Tanzanian Army Chief of Staff visited Gbarnga and held discussions with NPFL/NPRG on the deployment of the expanded ECOMOG and the disarmament process. This was the first visit by an ECOMOG Field Commander to the NPFL/NPRG area since signing of the Cotonou Agreement in July of 1993, and it helped to solidify the relationship between ECOMOG and NPFL/NPRG.

26. As indicated in my previous report (S/26868), I have established a trust fund through which Member States may contribute resources to help to meet the costs of the additional ECOMOG troops, as well as for the present ECOMOG troops, disarmament, elections and humanitarian assistance. The Government of the United States has pledged $19.83 million to the Trust Fund for the deployment and maintenance of the additional ECOMOG troops. To date, $8.83 million of this pledge has been remitted to the Trust Fund to cover the costs incurred in the uplifting and eventual repatriation of the additional troops. Contributions to the Trust Fund have also been received from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ($1 million) and Denmark ($295,000).

27. The additional ECOMOG troops have not yet received the logistic and maintenance support required for their deployment throughout Liberia. The United States pledge to meet these costs should cover the requirement of these battalions. In accordance with the terms of reference of the Trust Fund, ECOMOG has submitted to UNOMIL a budget for the requirements of the additional troops. UNOMIL is now consulting with the United States on the modalities for the use of its contribution in meeting the costs of the additional troops. While I expect that this issue will be resolved shortly, ECOMOG is facing major financial difficulties, which are of great concern.

28. One of these difficulties relates to the provision of stipends to the additional ECOMOG troops. Neither the troop-contributing countries, nor the major donor for the additional troops, the United States, are able to cover this cost and resources for stipends have not been made available from any other source. This issue is a major factor in troop morale, especially as the existing ECOMOG troops receive such stipends from their Governments.

29. The existing ECOMOG troops are also facing difficulties in their own logistic support. It should be remembered that the present ECOMOG troops have been assisting the peace process in Liberia since 1990. This effort is taxing the budgets of the contributing countries.

30. I once again urge Member States to assist the peace process in Liberia by providing financial assistance through the Trust Fund to help ECOMOG to meet the costs of stipends for the additional troops and logistic support for the existing troops.

D. Disarmament

31. With two battalions of the expanded ECOMOG having arrived in Liberia, consultations with ECOMOG and the parties on the date for disarmament have intensified. My Special Representative and Chief Military Observer have held frequent consultations with ECOMOG on its disarmament plan. My Special

Representative has reported that ECOMOG is currently finalizing essential details of the plan. ECOMOG has also indicated that it can commence disarmament with two battalions of the expanded ECOMOG.

32. The preparation of schedules for the implementation of disarmament, as called for in the Cotonou Agreement, has been delayed due to the reluctance of the parties to make available information on the number of their combatants and weapons and the location of mines. However, this information is currently being made available and, on this basis, joint UNOMIL/ECOMOG reconnaissance missions of designated encampment sites have been undertaken. Ten encampment sites have been identified, two for the Armed Forces of Liberia, four for NPFL/NPRAG and another four for ULIMO. Arrangements have also been finalized for the procurement of containers for the storage of weapons at encampment sites.

33. The parties have agreed that the disarmament of the approximately 60,000 combatants will commence simultaneously and is likely to continue over a two-to-three-month period. Combatants will assemble at predetermined locations and then be transported with their arms to encampment sites, where disarmament will take place. The disarmament plans designed by ECOMOG foresee the complete lifting of arms from all combatants, including the new armed groups that have recently emerged. As indicated in my previous report (S/26868), the Armed Forces of Liberia, the military arm of IGNU, has sought to link disarmament to pensionable arrangements. This issue is being addressed between the Armed Forces of Liberia and IGNU, so that it does not become an obstacle in disarming the Armed Forces of Liberia in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement.

E. Demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants

34. In accordance with paragraph 3 (e) of Security Council resolution 866 (1993) and as indicated in my report of 13 December 1993 (S/26828), UNOMIL has developed a plan for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian society. This plan covers the continuum from military disarmament to reintegration into civilian society and it involves the coordination of activities to be implemented by United Nations agencies and NGOs. After handing over their weapons at the encampment sites, ex-combatants will be clothed, fed and sensitized to the problems of their return to civilian society. They will be issued identification cards that will entitle them to immediate reintegration assistance, such as vocational training, medical care and agricultural assistance. This assistance will have to be financed through voluntary contributions.

35. In order to prepare local communities for the reintegration of ex-combatants, the plan includes community sensitization and rehabilitation activities. Under the sensitization programme, over 100 trainers are preparing to conduct workshops in communities throughout the country. The major themes of these workshops address the traumas caused by the war and the strengthening of local bonds for reconciliation and reintegration. UNOMIL has also sponsored a series of artistic performances that highlight the theme of reconciliation. Videos of each performance are being produced for use by a rural travelling team.

36. Planning of a community rehabilitation/reconstruction programme, in coordination with United Nations agencies and NGOs, is also well advanced. This programme involves quick-impact, labour-intensive, community projects that will help to fill the gap between immediate disarmament assistance and longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance. Such projects include the rebuilding of health centres, schools, roads and bridges, and participation in agricultural projects.

37. The reintegration programme described above is designed to help ex-combatants to reintegrate into civilian society, thus helping to reduce banditry and other illegal activities. The programme will also help local communities to establish economic and social stability. However, the financial requirements of this programme have not been met and I call on Member States to contribute to the programme through the United Nations agencies and NGOs or through the United Nations Trust Fund for the Implementation of the Cotonou Agreement in Liberia.

IV. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

38. Since my last progress report to the Security Council, the flow of humanitarian assistance has been severely disrupted in ULIMO-controlled areas. In the areas around Vahun, host to a large population of displaced persons and refugees, unruly actions directed against relief workers, their vehicles and other property brought humanitarian operations to a virtual standstill. A fact-finding mission composed of relief agencies, UNOMIL and ECOMOG has been dispatched to the area to assess the current security conditions and humanitarian needs.

39. Starting in mid-December, food shipments en route from Monrovia to NPFL/NPRAG areas were effectively blocked at Kakata, a town controlled by ULIMO. Discussions with ULIMO on this matter, in which the high command was assured of the strictly civilian and humanitarian character of the shipments, resulted in the resumption of deliveries on 31 January 1994. Humanitarian assistance continue to be delivered to NPFL/NPRAG areas through Côte d'Ivoire. Inspections at the border are carried out by JCMC teams at Danané and at Loguato. Negotiations are well advanced for securing the use of the train to haul relief supplies from Buchanan to Yekepta, which would further increase the volume of assistance to the central part of the country.

40. Owing to continued hostilities in the south-east, since January, a total of 9,911 displaced persons have arrived in Buchanan, where NGOs are providing them with food assistance. Parts of upper Lofa County have also remained inaccessible to relief assistance because of logistical barriers and factional fighting. Pockets of malnutrition persist in these areas. However, in accessible areas, where there have been modest harvests and regular food distributions, improvements have been registered in the nutritional status of the population.

41. With the deployment of UNOMIL and ECOMOG throughout the country, United Nations agencies and NGOs will be able to send needs assessment missions to Maryland County and other parts of the south-east that have long remained

inaccessible. It is expected that, once disarmament begins, humanitarian assistance will be able to flow freely throughout the whole country.

V. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

42. The General Assembly, by it decision 48/478 of 23 December 1993 authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount of $40,318,000 gross ($39,560,800 net) for the maintenance of UNOMIL for the period from 22 September 1993 to 21 April 1994. The cost of maintaining UNOMIL for the period ending 21 April 1994 will therefore be limited to the amount authorized by the General Assembly. An amount of $39.8 million was apportioned among Member States on 21 January 1994 for the cost of UNOMIL. As of 7 February 1994, some $17,000 has been received.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

43. As I stated in my previous report (S/26828), the most essential prerequisite for the establishment and maintenance of lasting peace and stability in Liberia is the faithful implementation of the Cotonou Agreement by the Liberian parties. The present impasse in the implementation of the Agreement has resulted from differing views among the parties on the date for the installation of the transitional Government and the commencement of disarmament. However I am pleased to note that progress has been made in discussions with IGNU on these outstanding issues, which could lead to a solution in the near future.

44. For my part, I have conveyed to the Liberian parties, through my Special Representative, the concern of the international community over the delays in the implementation of the Agreement. In this connection I have also emphasized to the parties that the continued support of the international community for the efforts of UNOMIL will depend on the full and prompt implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, including the installation of the transitional Government, disarmament and the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance. My Special Representative has also expressed similar views to the Liberian parties.

45. While there have been difficulties and delays in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, these remaining outstanding issues impeding implementation are not insurmountable. I therefore urge the Liberian parties to make a renewed and determined effort to reach a consensus and cooperate in good faith with UNOMIL and ECOMOG, so that the implementation of the Agreement can be expedited.

46. At this critical juncture, I would urge the international community to provide the necessary logistical and financial resources to ECOMOG in order to enable it to meet its obligations under the Cotonou Agreement. This would also facilitate the role of the international community as UNOMIL's ability to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council depends on the capacity of ECOMOG to discharge its responsibilities, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement. I therefore again appeal to all Member States that have not already done so to contribute generously to the United Nations Trust Fund set up for this purpose.

47. In order to enable the United Nations agencies and NGOs to provide assistance to all areas of the country, I call upon the parties, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement, to create the necessary conditions to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to all parts of Liberia. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to all parts of Liberia, especially to those parts of the country that have been inaccessible to relief agencies, will not only alleviate the plight of those affected but will also help to build confidence and social stability.

48. By its resolution 866 (1993), the Security Council mandated UNOMIL to assist the Liberian parties and ECOMOG in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, for a period of seven months, from 22 September 1993 to 21 April 1994. Five months after the adoption of resolution 866 (1993), the timetable originally envisaged in the Agreement has not been met as a result of differences among the parties. It is obvious that neither ECOWAS nor the United Nations is in a position to continue indefinitely to tolerate this impasse. In order to ensure the continued involvement of the international community, it is imperative that the Liberian parties cooperate with my Special Representative and ECOMOG and proceed with the peace process in order to enable me to provide, in my next report, a precise timetable for the holding of elections. At that time, I would also make the appropriate recommendations regarding UNOMIL's future mandate. I am aware that the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee of Nine will meet in the near future to review the status of the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement and make suitable recommendations. I very much hope that its deliberations and decisions may expedite the full and rapid implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, in particular the early installation of the transitional Government.

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